

Preliminary Amendment
Serial No.: filed concurrently
August 27, 2001

IN THE CLAIMS

Please substitute claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15-18 for the pending claims with the same numbers respectively:

1. (Amended) A metal chelate-forming fiber characterized in that at least one metal chelate forming compound selected from the group consisting of aminodicarboxylic acids, thiocarboxylic acid and phosphoric acid which are reactive to epoxy group is bonded to a fiber molecule of a natural fiber or regenerated fiber through a graft reaction product of a crosslinkable compound which has a reactive double bond and a glycidyl group in its molecule.

3. (Amended) The metal chelate-forming fiber according to claim 1, wherein said metal chelate forming compound is at least one selected from the group consisting of iminodiacetic acid, ethylenediaminediacetic acid, ethylenediaminetriacetic acid, thioglycolic acid, thiomalic acid and phosphoric acid.

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15. (Amended) The metal chelate forming fiber according to claim 1, wherein said natural or regenerated fiber is a vegetable fiber.

--7. (Amended) The metal chelate-forming fiber according to claim 1, wherein said natural fiber is an animal fiber.--

--8. (Amended) The metal chelate-forming fiber according to claim 1, wherein said fiber is powdery.--

--9. (Amended) The metal chelate-forming fiber according to claim 1, wherein said fiber is a filter material.

-- 12. (Amended) The process according to claim 10, wherein said metal chelate forming compound is at least one selected from the group consisting of iminodiacetic acid, ethylenediaminediacetic acid, ethylenediaminetriacetic acid, thioglycolic acid, thiomalic acid and phosphoric acid.--

--13. (Amended) The process according to claim 10, wherein said redox catalyst is a combination of a divalent iron salt, hydrogen peroxide and thiourea dioxide.

Preliminary Amendment
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August 27, 2001

--15. (Amended) A method of capturing metal ions, comprising bringing the metal chelate-forming fiber comprising at least one metal chelate-forming compound selected from the group consisting of aminodicarboxylic acids, thiocarboxylic acid and phosphoric acid which are reactive to epoxy group is bonded to a fiber molecule of a natural fiber or regenerated fiber through a graft reaction product of a crosslinkable compound which has a reactive double bond and a glycidyl group in its molecule, into contact with an aqueous liquid containing metal ions to thereby capture the metal ions from the aqueous liquid.--

--16. (Amended) A method of capturing metal ions, comprising bringing the metal chelate-forming fiber comprising at least one metal chelate-forming compound selected from the group consisting of aminodicarboxylic acids, thiocarboxylic acid and phosphoric acid which are reactive to epoxy group is bonded to a fiber molecule of a natural fiber or regenerated fiber through a graft reaction product of a crosslinkable compound which has a reactive double bond and a glycidyl group in its molecule, into

Preliminary Amendment
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August 27, 2001

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contact with an oily liquid containing metal ions to thereby
capture the metal ions from the oily liquid.

--17. (Amended) A method of capturing metal ions,
comprising

bringing the metal chelate-forming fiber comprising at least
one metal chelate-forming compound selected from the group
consisting of aminodicarboxylic acids, thiocarboxylic acid and
phosphoric acid which are reactive to epoxy group is bonded to a
fiber molecule of a natural fiber or regenerated fiber through a
graft reaction product of a crosslinkable compound which has a
reactive double bond and a glycidyl group in its molecule, into
contact with a gas containing metal ions to thereby capture the
metal ions from the gas.

--18. (Amended) A metal chelate fiber characterized in that
a metal is bonded by chelation to the metal chelate-forming fiber
comprising at least one metal chelate-forming compound selected
from the group consisting of aminodicarboxylic acids,
thiocarboxylic acid and phosphoric acid which are reactive to
epoxy group is bonded to a fiber molecule of a natural fiber or
regenerated fiber through a graft reaction product of a